

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4293  
INFO USIA WASHDC

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 3 PRAGUE 3529

STATE FOR EUR/EE--MR. SCHMIDT PLEASE PASS TO AMBASSADOR BYRNE;

USIA FOR IBS/PE AND IEU

E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: SOPN, CZ  
SUBJECT: SUGGESTED VOA CZECHOSLOVAK SERVICE YEAR-END INTERVIEW

1. FOLLOWING IS YEAR-END INTERVIEW THAT YOU MIGHT WANT TO  
CONSIDER RECORDING WITH VOA CZECHOSLOVAK SERVICE DURING YOUR  
CURRENT VISIT TO WASHINGTON. TEXT CLEARED BY POL, CONS, ECON/  
COMM, ON DRAFT PREPARED BY PAO. SUGGEST YOU MAKE ANY CHANGES  
YOU FEEL APPROPRIATE AND CONTACT HANS HOLZAPFEL, HEAD OF VOA  
EUROPEAN SERVICE, ABOUT RECORDING TIME.

2. TEXT FOLLOWS: ANNOUNCER: AMBASSADOR THOMAS R. BYRNE HAS  
BEEN THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR TO CZECHOSLOVAKIA FOR ALMOST TWO  
YEARS. BEFORE THAT, HE WAS AMERICAN AMBASSADOR TO NORWAY, AND  
SERVED IN THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, THE AMERICAN EMBASSY IN  
LONDON, AND IN SEVERAL OTHER DIPLOMATIC ASSIGNMENTS. AMBASSADOR  
BYRNE, AS YOU LOOK BACK ON THE TIME YOU HAVE SPENT IN  
CZECHOSLOVAKIA, WHAT ARE YOUR IMPRESSIONS OF THE LAND AND PEOPLE?

3. AMBASSADOR: WLL, THEY ARE VERY FAVORABLE IMPRESSIONS. I  
HAVE HAD THE PRIVILEGE OF TRAVELING IN SEVERAL OF THE MAJOR  
REGIONS OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA, MORAVIA, BOHEMIA, AND SLOVAKIA. I  
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HAVE VISITED THE DYNAMIC CITY OF BRATISLAVA; I THINK THE ENERGY  
AND VITALITY OF THE PEOPLE THERE, AND THE TREMENDOUS ECONOMIC  
AND SOCIAL PROGRESS THEY ARE MAKING IN TERMS OF EDUCATION AND  
CULTURE WILL COMPARE FAVORABLY WITH THE PROGRESS OF ANY CITY IN  
THE WORLD. MY WIFE AND I RECENTLY VISITED THE OSTRAVA REGION,  
IT WAS OUR SECOND VISIT THERE, AND HERE AGAIN WE WERE HIGHLY  
IMPRESSED. LIKewise BY BRNO, THE GREAT MORAVIAN CITY, WHERE I

ATTENDED THE LAST TWO SEPTEMBER ENGINEERING FAIRS. ONE OF OUR FAVORITE REGIONS REMAINS SOUTHERN AND WESTERN BOHEMIA, THE LANDS AROUND CESKE BUDEJOVICE, PLZEN, AND KARLOVY VARY, WHERE IN ADDITION TO RICH FARM LANDS, THERE IS SOME LOVELY COUNTRYSIDE. MY WIFE AND I HAVE BEEN DEEPLY IMPRESSED BY THE VARIETY OF THE TOWNS AND LANDSCAPES WE SAW, AND THE GENUINE WARMTH OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK PEOPLE WE HAVE MET.

4. ANNOUNCER: BOTH AMERICANS AND CZECHOSLOVAKS POINT TO THE DEEP HISTORICAL TIES BETWEEN THESE TWO COUNTRIES. DO YOU THINK THAT SUCH TIES HAVE ANY IMPORTANCE IN THE DAY-TO-DAY CONDUCT OF DIPLOMACY?

5. AMBASSADOR: I THINK THEY HAVE AN IMPORTANCE MANY PEOPLE DON'T REALIZE. FOR INSTANCE, SEVERAL HUNDRED THOUSAND SLOVAKS WENT TO AMERICA, MANY TO WORK IN THE STEEL INDUSTRY, BEFORE WORLD WAR II, AND THERE ARE SIZEABLE POPULATIONS OF CZECH ANCESTRY IN OUR EASTERN AND MID-WESTERN STATES AS WELL AS TEXAS, NEBRASKA AND CALIFORNIA. THEY HAVE MADE A REAL CONTRIBUTION TO AMERICAN LIFE. THERE IS A SLOVAK SAYING, "EVERY SLOVAK FAMILY HAS A RELATIVE IN AMERICA;" IT IS PROBABLY REASONABLY ACCURATE. AT THE SAME TIME, EVERY STUDENT OF MODERN HISTORY WILL APPRECIATE THE FACT THAT IN 1918 THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT WOODROW WILSON PLAYED A VERY IMPORTANT ROLE IN BRINGING ABOUT THE BIRTH OF THE FIRST CZECHOSLOVAK REPUBLIC. AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA'S FIRST PRESIDENT, THOMAS MASARYK, HAD AN AMERICAN WIFE, KEPT CLOSE TIES WITH THE UNITED STATES THROUGHOUT HIS

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PRESIDENCY, AND IN FACT, ISSUED THE DECLARATION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA'S INDEPENDENCE WHILE HE WAS IN WASHINGTON IN OCTOBER 1918. ONE MIGHT ALSO RECALL THAT THE AMERICAN MILITARY'S ROLE IN THE LIODRATION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA AT THE END OF WORLD WAR II IS A FACT OF HISTORY.

6. ANNOUNCER: TURNING TO A SOMEWHAT DIFFERNET TOPIC, THE CURRENT STATE OF CZECHOSLOVAK-AMERICAN POLITICAL RELATIONS, HOW WOULD YOU CHARACTERIZE THEM?

7. AMBASSADOR: IN RECENT YEARS WE HAVE OUR SHARE OF PROBLEMS, SOME OF WHICH CONTINUE TO NAG US, AND A FEW BRIGHT SPOTS AS WELL. TO TURN TO THE POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS FIRST, AN INCREASING NUMBER OF AMERICAN TOURISTS ARE COMING TO CZECHOSLOVAKIA EACH YEAR. THESE INCLUDE, NOT ONLY AMERICAN CITIZENS OF CZECHOSLOVAK DESCENT, BUT TOURISTS IN EUROPE WHO ARE COMING TO APPRECIATE THE SCENIC BEAUTY OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND THE ARCHITECTURAL TREASURES OF PRAGUE. ONE SOURCE ESTIMATED THERE MUST BE 7,500 AMERICAN TOURISTS MONTHLY IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA ON THE AVERAGE DURING THE JUNE-SEPTEMBER SEASON. MANY OF THESE TOURIST STAY FIVE DAYS OR LONGER. AND, OF COURSE, THAT IS A HARD CURRENCY EARNER FOR CZECHOSLOVAKIA AS WELL.

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STATE FOR EUR/EE--MR. SCHMIDT PLEASE PASS TO AMBASSADOR BYRNE;

USIA FOR IBS/PE AND IEU

8. ANOTHER POSITIVE POINT CONCERNS THE BASIC STATE OF OUR CULTURAL RELATIONS. EACH YEAR CZECHOSLOVAKIA SENDS NUMEROUS MUSICAL GROUPS TO THE UNITED STATES, USUALLY TO PLAY IN SEVERAL CITIES, AND ON LONG TOURS. SOME OF YOUR STRING QUARTETS, CHAMBER GROUPS, AND SOLOISTS ARE EXTREMELY WELL KNOWN IN THE UNITED STATES. I WAS ALSO DELIGHTED TO LEARN THAT THE METROPOLITAN OPERA IN NEW YORK IS DISCUSSING ADDING SMETANA'S "BARTERED BRIDE" TO ITS REPERTOIRE NEXT SEASON. THAT WOULD BE A MAJOR CULTURAL PLUS FOR CZECHOSLOVAKIA. LIKEWISE, A PROMINENT AMERICAN STAGE DIRECTOR, WHO RECENTLY VISITED PRAGUE, TOLD US THE FAMOUS JULLIARD MUSIC SCHOOL IS PLANNING TO DO JANACEK'S "JENUFA" NEXT YEAR. HE SAID, "AMERICAN AUDIENCES, NOT ONLY IN NEW YORK, BUT ELSEWHERE, ARE BEGINNING TO DISCOVER THE GREAT CZECHOSLOVAK COMPOSERS, AND INCLUDE THEM IN THEIR REPERTOIRES." THAT IS AN ENCOURAGING SIGN, TOO. AND, OF COURSE, WE ARE DISCUSSING THE IMPLEMENTATION PART OF AN EXCHANGES AGREEMENT WHICH, ONCE SIGNED, SHOULD LAY A SOLID BASIS FOR A GRADUAL EXPANSION OF OUR CULTURAL, SCIENTIFIC, AND EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGES PROGRAMS. WE CONCLUDED SUCH AN AGREEMENT WITH BULGARIA EARLIER THIS YEAR, HAVE LONG HAD ONE WITH THE SOVIET UNION, AND ARE DISCUSSING ONE WITH HUNGARY AS WELL.

9. ECONOMICALLY, WE HAD IMPORTANT TALKS IN WASHINGTON THIS  
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AUTUMN OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK-AMERICAN ECONOMIC COUNCIL. THERE WAS ALSO RECENTLY SIGNED A COOPERATION AGREEMENT BETWEEN ONE OF AMERICA'S LARGEST MAUFACTURERS OF FARM MACHINERY, ALLIS-CHALMERS, AND MOTOKOV, A CZECHOSLOVAK FOREIGN TRADE COMPANY, WHICH WILL PAVE THE WAY TO SUBSTANTIAL TWO-WAY TRADE IN FARM TRACTORS. WE ALL LOOK FORWARD TO A GREATER EXPANSION OF TRADE BETWEEN OUR COUNTRIES IN OTHER PRODUCT LINES. IN ANOTHER MATTER, THERE HAS BEEN SOME ENCOURAGING PROGRESS ON THE QUESTION OF DIVIDED FAMILIES, ESSENTIALLY FAMILIES SEPARATED BY CITIZENSHIP QUESTIONS.

10. POLITICALLY, HOWEVER, OUR RELATIONS HAVE NOT ALWAYS BEEN SMOOTH. ONE OF THE MAIN OBSTACLES HAS BEEN THE FACT THAT WE ARE YET TO CONCLUDE A FINAL SETTLEMENT TO WHAT HAS COME TO BE CALLED THE CLAIMS/GOLD QUESTION. AS YOUR KNOW, THE UNITED STATES IS SEEKING TO OBTAIN ADEAUATE COMPENSATION FOR PROPERTIES FORMERLY OWNED BY AMERICAN CITIZENS BUT NATIONALIZED BY THE CZECHOSLOVAK GOVERNMENT AFTER WORLD WAR II. AT THE SAME TIME, CZECHOSLOVAKIA SEEKS THE RETURN OF 18.4 METRIC TONS OF GOLD WHICH CAME INTO ALLIED CUSTODY AT THE END OF WORLD WAR II. THE LONG HISTORY OF THESE NEGOTIATIONS IS FAMILIAR TO OFFICIALS OF BOTH SIDES, BUT I DO NOT THINK IT IS USEFUL TO RECHEW THE PAST SO MUCH AS IT IS TO POINT OUT THAT BOTH THE CZECHOSLOVAK AND AMERICAN GOVERNMENTS, AFTER A CERTAIN LAPSE OF TIME, ARE AGAIN ACTIVELY TALKING ABOUT THIS QUESTION, AND I THINK THAT IS A HIGHLY ENCOURAGING SIGN. I WOULD ALSO ADD THE CLEAR SIGNS OF IMPROVEMENT IN THE OVERALL EAST-WEST RELATIONSHIP DURING THE SECOND HALF OF THIS YEAR AS ANOTHER ENCOURAGING SIGN--THOUGH DIFFERENCES OVER RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS REMAIN A PROBLEM.

11. ANNOUNCER: IN THIS REGARD, WHAT ARE YOUR VIEZY ON THE BELGRADE FOLLOWUP CONFERENCE TO THE HELSINKI FINAL ACT OF 1975? DO YOU THINK ANYTHING WAS ACHIEVED, AND IS BEING ACHIEVED AT BELGRADE?

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12. AMBASSADOR: I AM OPTIMISTIC ABOUT BOTH THE HELSINKI AND BELGRADE CONFERENCES. TAKING THE LONG VIEW, THEY VERY WELL MAY REPRESENT A NEW ERA IN EAST-WEST DIALOGUE. OF COURSE, THE IMPORTANT QUESTION OF SECURITY LOOMS LARGE, AND HERE THE SALT AND MBFR NEGOTIATIONS HAVE PRODUCED ENCOURAGING RESULTS. BUT ON THE BELGRADE CONFERENCE, A LOT OF OTHER QUESTIONS WERE RAISED FRANKLY, OPENLY, SOMETIMES SHARPLY, BUT THAT IS A HEALTHY SIGN. FOR ONE THING, WE ARE ALL ACKNOWLEDGING THAT QUESTIONS LIKE ENERGY AND TECHNOLOGY, POLLUTION AND THE ENVIRONMENT ARE CRUCIAL QUESTIONS OF OUR TIME THAT TRANSCEND POLITICAL BOUNDARIES. IF I WERE TO HAZARD A PERSONAL GUESS, I WOULD EXPECT THERE TO BE MUCH GREATER COOPERATION BETWEEN EAST AND WEST, AND AMONG THE HELSINKI SIGNATORY NATIONS, ON THESE QUESTIONS IN YEARS AHEAD.

13. AT BELGRADE, THE WHOLE QUESTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS WAS RAISED AND

THIS, TOO, WAS HEALTHY, ONCE THE IMMEDIATE POLEMICS ARE PUT ASIDE. TWO BASICALLY CONTRADICTORY VIEWS OF HUMAN RIGHTS EMERGED OUT OF TWO HISTORICAL TRADITIONS. THE "SOCIALIST" VIEW IS THAT HUMAN RIGHTS ARE REFLECTED IN FULL EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL, AND HEALTH BENEFITS. OUR OWN TRADITION, TRACEABLE TO OUR EARLIEST HISTORY, PUTS A PREMIUM ON THE INDIVIDUAL BEING ABLE TO SPEAK OUT FREELY AND WITHOUT REPRISALS ON POLITICAL, SOCIAL, AND RELIGIOUS QUESTIONS, TO TRAVEL FREELY, TO READ AND WRITE WHAT HE OR SHE WANTS TO--IN ADDITION TO EFFORTS BY THE GOVERNMENT TO ENSURE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROSPERITY. THERE IS NOTHING NEW IN ANY OF THESE PROVISIONS, THEY COME DEEPLY FROM OUR HISTORY, AND THE LANGUAGE OF THE CSCE FINAL DOCUMENT SUPPORTS THEM.

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STATE FOR EUR/EE--MR. SCHMIDT PLEASE PASS TO AMBASSADOR BYRNE;

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14. ANNOUNCER: BUT CRITICS OF THE UNITED STATES POINT TO UNEMPLOYMENT, RACIAL QUESTIONS, URBAN QUESTIONS, ETC., AS EXAMPLES OF WHERE PEOPLE ARE DEPRIVED OF FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS. HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THAT?

15. AMBASSADOR: I DON'T THINK ANYONE WOULD DENY THAT WE HAVE PROBLEMS IN THE UNITED STATES, AND SOMETIMES I WISH THOSE WHO EXAMINE OUR SOCIETY SO SEARCHINGLY WOULD TREAT ALL COUNTRIES IN A SIMILAR MANNER. PROBLEMS ARE PROBLEMS. THERE IS NO REASON WHY THEY SHOULD NOT BE DISCUSSED. BUT OUR GOVERNMENT'S POLICY IS TO WORK INCREASINGLY FOR PROGRESS ON SUCH MATTERS. AND I THINK IT IS A FACT THAT THE AVERAGE AMERICAN FAMILY IS BETTER OFF ON ALL THESE QUESTIONS THAN THE AVERAGE FAMILY VIRTUALLY ANYWHERE ELSE IN THE WORLD.

16. ANNOUNCER: HOW DO YOU SEE THE YEAR AHEAD?

17. AMBASSADOR: IT IS HARD TO LOOK AT THE FUTURE. IT IS DIFFICULT ENOUGH TO KEEP UP WITH THE DAY TO DAY DEVELOPMENTS IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS. THERE ARE OF COURSE, A NUMBER OF QUESTIONS THAT WILL BE PRIMARY ONES IN AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY. THE BASIC ONE IS FINDING AREAS FOR PEACEFUL COOPERATION AND PEACEFUL COMPETITION BETWEEN  
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THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION. THE COMPLICATED QUESTIONS OF PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND A SOLUTION TO SOME OF THE OUT-STANDING AFRICAN PROBLEMS WILL CONTINUE TO BE WITH US. INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND FISCAL QUESTIONS WILL CONTINUE TO LOOM LARGE. SO WILL HUMAN RIGHTS. SO WILL ARMS LIMITATION. THE LIST IS LONGER, BUT I THINK THESE ARE AMONG THE MAIN CONCERNS FACING US. BASICALLY, I AM ENCOURAGED BY THE POSITIVE, PRAGMATIC DEVELOPMENTS IN EAST-WEST RELATIONS AND I THINK THAT WE HAVE MADE SOME CLEAR PROGRESS IN CZECHOSLOVAK-AMERICAN RELATIONS IN THE LAST YEAR, DESPITE DIFFICULTIES, AND HAVE A FIRM FOUNDATION TO DO EVEN MORE THIS YEAR.

18. ANNOUNCER: DO YOU HAVE ANY FINAL NOTE ON WHICH YOU WOULD LIKE TO CLOSE?

19. AMBASSADOR: YES, DURING THIS HOLIDAY SEASON I WOULD LIKE TO EXTEND BEST WISHES FOR A JOYFUL CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO EACH AND EVERY PERSON IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA, TO THE LEADERSHIP OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK GOVERNMENT, TO ITS CITIZENS, TO THOSE PEOPLE I HAVE BEEN PRIVILEGED TO MEET IN MY TRAVELS, AND TO ALL WHO WITH TIES OF KINSHIP OR INTEREST HAVE ANY LINKS WITH THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

20. ANNOUNCER: AT THIS YEAR'S END, WE HAVE BEEN TALKING WITH AMBASSADOR THOMAS R. BYRNE, AMERICAN AMBASSADOR TO CZECHOSLOVAKIA.  
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